

Animal Health Safeguarding Review Implementation Progress Report November 2002

I. Progress achieved in implementing the review:

Surveillance

- Syndromic surveillance pilot project – VS is collaborating with Kansas State University and Sandia National Labs to pilot test the Rapid Syndrome Validation Project. This project will ask private practitioners to report clinical syndromes observed in their practice areas in order to rapidly identify potential disease outbreaks. The project is modeled after syndromic surveillance efforts being used in the public health arena. Safeguarding Review recommendation #7 addressed the need for the national surveillance system to provide methods for the early detection of emerging diseases.
- Enhanced classical swine fever surveillance – A plan for enhancing classical swine fever (CSF) surveillance has been developed. The enhanced surveillance plan identifies and targets higher risk swine populations and shifts the emphasis from identifying sero-conversion at slaughter establishments to virus isolation and observation of clinical signs. These changes will provide for a more rapid detection of CSF were it to enter the United States. Safeguarding Review recommendation #8 addressed the need for the national surveillance system to incorporate foreign animal disease surveillance needs.

Response

- Satellite seminar on Biological and Chemical Warfare and Terrorism – On November 5th APHIS personnel participated in the first of six satellite seminars on “Biological and Chemical Warfare and Terrorism.” Subject matter experts from the U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases (USAMRID), the U.S. Army Research Institute of Chemical Defense (USARICD), and other agencies provided information. Several Safeguarding Review recommendations addressed the need for creating national pools of emergency responders and extending training opportunities (#s 113 and 114).

Exclusion

- Development of information systems – Several key information systems supporting exclusion, surveillance and response activities are being developed, enhanced, and integrated. These systems include: Automated Targeting System (PPQ), ePermits (APHIS), data warehouse (VS), interstate certificate of veterinary inspection (VS), animal and animal product tracking (VS), and the Generic

disease database (VS). Several Safeguarding Review recommendations call for using improved technology to achieve VS objectives (#s 3, 16, and 108).

Laboratory System

- Diagnostic test validation criteria drafted– VS personnel participated as consultants to the *OIE Validation and Certification of Diagnostic Assays for Infectious Animal Disease* meeting in Vienna, Austria the week of November 18th. The consultants provided recommendations to OIE on a system for validating and registering assays to be used for diagnostic or surveillance purposes for infectious animal diseases. The emphasis of the recommendations was international trade in livestock or livestock products. Several Safeguarding Review recommendations addressed the need for applied research to support response activities (#137 and 138).
- Security and disaster planning in Ames – A biometric security system has been installed at the VS Center for Veterinary Biologics facility in Ames, Iowa. In addition, representatives from NVSL and CVB in Ames met with USDA officials and several consultants to discuss the development of disaster preparedness plans for the Ames campus. Once completed, these business resumption, disaster preparedness, and continuation of operations plans will provide a systematic method by which operations would be resumed following an event impacting all or part of the Ames facility. Safeguarding Review recommendation #18 addressed the need to assure that APHIS laboratories are able to carry out their critical safeguarding roles.

Information Technology

- Information technology issues discussed at management team – Presentations on current and future plans to develop an enterprise Geographic Information System within VS and to augment the VS information technology infrastructure were given at the VS Management Team meeting in early November. Decisions were made at that meeting that will assist VS in increasing the level of data oversight and training on information systems within VS. Safeguarding Review recommendations #s 127 and 129 address needs for expanded information technology infrastructure.
- New GIS capability being utilized in Exotic Newcastle response – A new GIS capability added to the Emergency Management Reporting System (EMRS) has been used successfully by the California Exotic Newcastle Taskforce. New high speed servers are also being deployed to support the GIS module. Safeguarding review recommendation #129 called for expanded use of GIS.

Organizational Dynamics/Communication

- Leadership training provided – On November 4 and 5th, leadership training was provided to 25 NVSL and CVB employees. The USDA Graduate School provided the training. Leadership development and succession planning were themes in several Safeguarding Review recommendations (#s 65 and 141).

II. Implementation activities:

The Surveillance Issue Group met the week of November 4th in Fort Collins, Colorado. Seven action plans were drafted. Twenty-one safeguarding recommendations are entirely, or in part, addressed by the draft action plans. The Surveillance group will meet again the week of February 3rd.

The Exclusion Issues Group held a meeting in Conyers, Georgia the week of November 18th. Four action plans were worked on and the group made site visits to the Georgia Equine Import Facility and the International Passenger and Product Facilities at the Atlanta airport. A second meeting of the group is scheduled for the week of February 10th.

The Organizational Dynamics Issue Group met the week of November 18th. Four action plans were drafted. The group will meet again in February 2003.

The Coordinated Response Issue Group will be meeting the week of December 9th in Kansas City to continue work on the development of action plans.

The Veterinary Accreditation Issue Group will meet in late January/early February 2003.

The Laboratory Issues subgroup is planning a meeting during 2nd quarter FY 2003. Tentative plans include a site visit to the NAHLN facility in Davis California.

The Information Technology Issue Group will meet the week of January 20th to work on action plans.

Comments and questions regarding this report can be directed to Carol Tuszynski at Area Code (970) 494-7320.

